BISMARCK.

Seen From An American Point Of View.

The eightieth natal day of Bismarck, which fell last week—Bismarck having been born on April 1, 1815, two and a half months before the battle of Waterloo—is one of those events which challenges the thoughts and admiration of all nations. If he who maintains himself by the greatest power is necessarily the greatest minister, Bismarck was the greatest minister, "not of one age, but for all times."

The sympathetic human side of this universal commotion is, however, the fact that it is not the powerful minister that is celebrated and eulogized today. Bismarck, the minister, ceased to be five years ago, when the young German Emperor accepted his resignation as a matter of —"the new course." The man that is extolled today is nothing but the pensioned mastersmith of the German empire. The once mighty, omnipotent Chancellor has been divested of all officia powers; the man upon whose lips formerly the whole of Europe hung in fear and expectation, now strides silently among the forest oaks near Friedrichsruhe, only emerging from the calm of his retirement when the honors of a grateful nation are showered upon him.

And there is a vast deal of fine sentimentality in this political canonization of Bismarck.

Everything that appeals to pure sympathy is so strongly involved in this administration that it seems almost sacrilegious to desecrate the high-soaring enthusiasm by cold and sober reflection. The spectacle of the octogenarian, who of all the heroes that helped to build the German empire, alone is left—warded off by the one whose favor he would most appreciate —is bound to strike a sympathetic chord among the onlookers the world over.

That into this sympathy many an exaggeration of the greatness of the man, if he be judged by his principles and accomplishments, will slip, I have the harshness to maintain.

Few generations are given an opportunity of gazing retrospectively upon the finished career of any living man of such importance as that of Bismarck. The grace of God may extend Bismarck's life to the utmost limit, but his work is complete and his deeds are recorded in contemporaneous history. The present generation can pass judgment on what he has done. It can appreciate the wonderful conception of his national work, which is and must ever remain his crowning work; as the endurance and the unswerving fidelity that he devoted to it form his noblest trait. But the present generation can also measure the standards, the principles, the ideals that guided him in his career; and the present generation is at liberty to disagree with many of these that Bismarck upheld and represented.

Bismarck's first step in public life is distinctively characteristic in that it condemned one of the fundamental privileges which a probably misguided part of mankind upholds as one of their most precious blessings—a parliamentary government.

It is well worth while recalling the incident. The obstinate refusal of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia to grant to his people their demand for a constitutional form of monarchy had aroused grave discontent. The king, through "Royal Patent," convened the United Prussian Chambers, and among the deputies (for the province of Saxony) was Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck-Schœnhausen. After an uneventful youth, during which he went through college, where he kept a loof from the spirit of liberty then prevading the German universities, and experimented with law, agriculture and officialism, he finally entered the political arena.

His first speech was made on May 17, 1847. He then declared himself a firm adherent to the "sacred rights of absolute monarchy." He ridiculed the assertion of his liberal opponents that the uprising of 1813 was done for any other purpose than the expulsion of the foreign invaders. He declaimed with warmth against the "Utopian ravings" of the newspapers (in this respect he never altered his position a hair's breadth), and demanded "absolute faith in the wisdom of the crown."

He wound up by fighting against the emancipation laws then before the Chamber, boldly contending that emancipation was a sentimental idea, hostile to Christian government, and concluding with these words: "If these are mediæval principles, I will gladly say that I believe in them." Even when, after the revolution of 1848, the King was compelled to make concessions, Bismarck vainly raised his voice in protest against all acknowledgments of the people's will. Later on, during Wilhelm's regency, and in the stirring times when Wilhelm finally ascended the throne, Bismarck was the rock against which all liberal hopes were shattered. For fully three years, Bismarck fretted and fumed against any recognition of the "sovereignty of the people;" which he characterized as "one of the tearful sentimentalities of the century." He advocated a continuous state of siege and did all in his power to destroy the parliamentary concessions which the spirit of the times had finally wrested from the King. The king [Bismarck first came in contact with King Friederich Wilhelm IV. and the Prince-Regent during his wedding trip in Venice] eyed his champion with loving solicitude. It cannot be said that in those early days the great excuse which, in later days, his admirers perhaps justly advanced, that only fear for the safety and greatness of the country impelled him to attack parliamentary rights, will stand the test. At that time, while the problem of great national unity possibly occupied his mind, he had no definite plan to evolve; there was no diplomatic secret to be guarded; there were no ultimate ends of the blood-and-iron policy to be concealed. Whatever is the justification of Bismarck's anti-parliamentary activity after the Frankfurt Diet of 1851, when he commenced the work that ended with the unity of the German nation, there is no defensible motive for it before that date. It was the result of nothing but an inborn contempt for human rights or a desire to please the powers that be.

We can well understand now that Bismarck, after 1866, conscious of the necessity of military demands — a necessity that he could not publicly divulge—lost his patience encountering the stubborn and sometimes malicious opposition of political factions, and loathed the trials of the responsible minister of a constitutional form of government.

But how can one in this enlightened century, where the proofs of the possibility of absolute free and parliamentary governments are furnished by all advanced nations, how can one reconcile with greatness the belief in "Royalty by the grace of God?" And Bismarck will be handed down to posterity, not only as the maker of the German empire, but also as the sturdy, tenacious defender of absolute royalty. He was first or foremost in the service of his sovereign. The national idea, through which he achieved his fame, was only a secondary consideration with him. Bismarck's words on many occasions, and his deeds on a few, bear undoubted testimony to that fact.

The greatness and power of his master, the Hohenzollern ["sein Herr," as he loved to call him—was his first care. On three occasions, with noble eloquence, he repudiated the proposed renaissance of the German Empire. On the first, because there was danger that the imperial crown would go to the Hapsburger, and twice because he did not think the time ripe and his master strong enough for that consummation, otherwise devoutly to be wished for. Of course, these hesitations may be justly construed as a demonstration of his superior statesmanship, and they probably are. But they are at the same time a convincing proof that dynastic considerations were far stronger with Bismarck than national ambitions.

If the scions of the noble house of Hapsburg had been imbued with national spirit and aspiration, instead of being tenderlings as they are, Bismarck would have led a war to the knife with the Austrians instead of treating them after Sadowa with so much indulgence and patience. He would have led column after column of "sound Pommeranian bones" to certain destruction before giving his consent to the formation of a united Germany with anybody else but a Hohenzollern at the head.

If in the face of the great national work effected by Bismarck, the reproach that he was insincere should seem bold, it would be as well to recall the words with which Bismarck explained his motives for refusing the establishment of national unity under comparatively peaceful circumstances. When in 1849 a deputation of the National Assembly from Frankfort-on-the-Main, headed by the German patriot and poet, Arndt, urged the King of Prussia to accept the imperial crown, which the Assembly offered him, and to establish German unity, Bismarck said: "No; before the King of Prussia degrades himself to become a vassal to those radical Utopians who believe in German unity, let Prussia remain Prussia. The constitution fabricated in Frankfort, which upholds the damnable principle of the sovereignty of the people, is nothing but constitutional anarchy. It is bound to demolish the glorious Prussian state edifice which has been cemented with the blood of our forefathers. The imperial crown tendered from Frankfort may be brilliant, but the gold which will lend truth to this Utopian brilliancy must first be gotten by infusing the splendor of the Prussian crown." And in 1850 he said, in combating the unionistic scheme of Radowitz:

"Prussian honor demands first that Prussia hold aloof from all infamous connection with the democracy, and secondly, that never shall anything happen in Germany without the supreme consent of Prussia."

It will be hard for the future viewer, who, uninfluenced by the present glamor of national prosperity in Germany, looks calmly upon the historic figure of Bismarck to reconcile these views with the later purely national attitude of the Chancellor. As a matter of fact, the national chauvinist, Bismarck, may have been born only during the eventful battles of 1866, though Charles Lowe, in his book on the Chancellor, tries very hard to furnish evidence that Bismarck began to lay his national plans during the Crimean war.

"It is evident," argues Lowe, "that Prussia's policy during and after the Crimean war, with all its ambiguousness and seeming falsity, harmonized with the views of Bismarck." (Bismarck entered the Prussian Cabinet only in October, 1862.) "But who would have dreamed that a certain Herr von Bismarck had begun to take the fate of Europe in his hand?" And who would do so to-day if subsequent historic events did not justify such generous surmisings?

Certainly, Bismarck's diplomatic activity in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris was apparently guided by only one sentiment—an uncompromising hatred of Austria. And the Austria of then was not the Austria of to-day, with the center of gravity in Budapesth according to the description of Dr. Bismarck. In his memorial "concerning the necessity of the inauguration of an independent Prussian-German policy," in which he predicts that Prussia's illness will only be cured *ferro et igni*, there is not one allusion to the idea of national unity, for which he is said to have battled all his lifetime. And I cannot suppress the feeling that to Bismarck, as to all mortals "who cook with water," the poet's word applies—that man grows with his higher aims and that aims sometimes grow with men. But let it be granted that Bismarck's interest in the nation's and in Prussia's greatness were one and the same, both because his fine manœuvering in the Schleswig-Holstein question and his moderation after the Prusso-Austria war as well, tend to show that, and because it will endear him to the German heart. It does not add a molecule to his greatness as a statesman. The mere fact that being a German he strove to strengthen the German name does not lend him greatness. That should be a matter of course. No Frenchman would ever dream of being glorified because he has the nterest of his nation at heart instead of that of the "department" in which he was born. As German patriot, Bismarck finds his equals in tens of thousands who are willing to leave their life-blood on the battlefields of the Fatherland.

The merit of taking up the problem of the national idea would have been nothing wonderful if his overwhelming success as master-diplomat of the century had not enabled him to realize it. The national idea in itself has had more spirited advocates than Bismarck, who have failed to attract more than passing notice. Even that adventurer on an emperor's throne, whose overthrow was Bismarck's masterwork, grasped it as the one leading principle in his adventurous career. Indeed, Napoleon III. was much quicker to cater to the political feeling of Europe as the advocate of national unity, and much more outspoken.

But aside from all this, what is Hecuba to us? What is national unity to a country where members of *all nationalities* live in blissful, prosperous peace? What is the glory of the unitor of one nation to the glorious coalition of all nations under a free, self-constituted of the people, for the people?

If the theory of Bismarck and Napoleon III, were the only saving one, the United States would be an impossibility. As a matter of fact, Bismarck has never looked with loving eyes upon Germans seeking a new field of activity in new countries under different and necessarily freer governments. "The German admiration for all that is foreign," said he in a speech in the Reichstag, dealing with the Polish question, "a certain admiring jealousy with which we look upon compatriots who live in foreign countries, is only equal to the peculiar capability of a German to leap out of his skin into that of any foreigner—say a Frenchman or an American. If any one returns from America after having been there three years, he speak of 'our side of the water,' and, *horribile dictu*, uses English idioms." (This is very sad indeed, but coming from such lips it seems to be a splendid testimonial to the fitness of the greater part of Germany's sons to become excellent American citizens.)

Even in such a cursory examination of the claims of Bismarck te remain forever upon the high historian pedestal upon which his own thankful age has placed him, it is impossible to overlook his legislative activity on burning economical and social problems, an activity that commenced at an age when other mortals have finished their life's task. His efforts in this direction, which have not yet had time to mature, have been marked by the same providence, acuteness of intellect and singleness of purpose that have always compelled his diplomatic endeavors to complete and convincing triumphs. His talents, indeed, in all the departments in which they have occupied themselves, his masterful attributes of zeal, thoroughness and will, his rare attainments in diplomacy and statecraft, no equanimous critic would seek to deny. But that he is, or ever was in his state career, a man of broad, humane views, uninsular, cosmopolitan, philanthropic in his inclipation in social questions or governmental policies—well, to say the least, that is a matter of which much may be said on both sides.

The recent events in Germany the refusal of the majority of the Reichstag to send congratulatory messages to the retired Chancellor, the sudden attachment of that chameleon-like young man on the German throne to the servant whom he dismissed so unceremoniously only a few years ago, must be regarded in an entirely different light from that in which the noisy German patriots wish it to be regarded. It is not a question of gratitude or ingratitude to the clever diplomat who accomplished the unity of the German empire (and, incidentally, the good fortune of the Hohenzollern); it is a question of indorsing the damnable principle that Bismarck represents, that of monarchical servility.

ALEXANDER NEUMAN.

Peerless.

A few days ago a company was formed in this city who purchased from C. J. Wagner the whole and exclusive rights for the Hawaiian Islands to manufacture and use the Peerless Preserving Paint. There have been numberless attempts to produce an article which would preserve and at the same time protect the various roofs over buildings on these islands all of which have met with more or less success. but each possessing some weakness in point or quality which has rendered it practically useless in carrying out the purpose for which it was intended. It had been left with Mr. Wagner to place upon the Hawaiian Market a paint which by experiment and in actual use during the past few years has fulfilled every requirement and the Paint is guaranteed not to scale, crack, or run it being possessed of a body when applied in which there is no oil spirits or evaporative substance. The main features which the new company offers for its use upon roofs an its thorough resistance to any action of hot or salty atmosphere and its wonderful preserving qualities which fully prevent any rust or decay, besides being a preventative from the ravages of pests. The Peerless Preserving Co., are prepared to send skilled workmen for the purpose of applying the paint and every contract taken by the company is fully guaranteed. The prices for this work including labor and material are very moderate considering that the guarantee is against leaks, etc., for a period estimated upon the age and condition of the roofs when the work is performed.

The Peerless Preserving Co., will on application at their office, 87 King Street, examine your roof and give estimates free of charge, also on bridges, ports, etc. 1t dly.
